

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Claims:

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 9, 12, and 14.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 6-8, 10, 11, 21, 24, and 35 would be allowable, if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base and intervening claims. Therefore, the Applicants have:

amended independent claim 1 by incorporating the limitations of claims 5 and 6, and amended claims 7, 10, 11, and 13 to depend from currently amended claim 1;

amended independent claim 17 by incorporating the limitations of claim 21;
and

cancelled claim set 27-35.

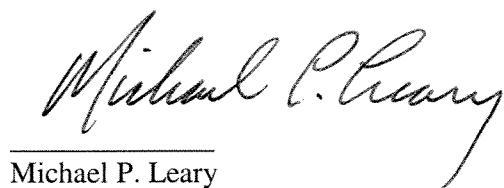
Thus, the Applicants submit that amended independent claims 1 and 17 and their respective dependent claims are now in condition for allowance.

For at least the reasons articulated in previous amendments, the Applicants disagree with the Examiner's rejection of the previously presented independent claims 1, 17, and 27 as obvious in view of a combination of Bausch '901 and Dibbern '774, or a combination of Bausch '901 and Schell '177. In order to obtain timely protection for their product, the Applicants have, however, made the amendments above as suggested by the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the broader cancelled and previously presented claims in a Continuation Application.

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Respectfully submitted



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